

Chapter 3: Excelling as an Employee A Mentor's Guide

“Perseverance is the hard work you do after you get tired of doing the hard work you already did.”

— Newt Gingrich

Introduction

This chapter is all about learning how to be a great employee and persevering when things get tough. Understanding how to be a great employee will not only help you keep your job, but can potentially help you earn promotions and an increased salary. It's always important to put your best foot forward, even if you don't love the job you are doing or the people you are working for. Great employees take initiative and don't make up excuses about a job poorly done. Great employees take responsibility for themselves and their success. While some entry-level jobs may not be ideal, it is important to view ones first job as a 'stepping stone' to future opportunities. Each step you take forward helps move you closer to your goal and career success.

Job Keepers and Killers

Job Keepers and Killers is a very basic overview of expectations of pretty much any entry-level employee. Take a moment to read through each point and consider why the item was chosen for this list. Being a good employee is a choice! Don't be influenced by the behavior of friends and other colleagues because not everyone follows these common rules.

10 (Make that 15) Commandments for Excelling as an Employee

The document *10 (Make that 15) Commandments for Excelling as an Employee* goes into further detail about how to be an outstanding employee. We'd suggest reading this list after the first week on the job. Consider each point and identify action steps that you can take to improve over the next several weeks. Please note that your supervisor may value different traits than you might think are important. If you have a supportive supervisor, you may consider reviewing this list and asking them to define each item and identify those that are of particular importance to them.

Job Top Time Management Tips

Universally one of the key skills of a great employee is time management. The *Top Time Management Tips* will give you a brief overview of strategies to effectively manage your tasks in the workplace and at home too. As you approach your day, consider what you want to

accomplish, how much time you have, and how you'll need to make adjustments in your work to accomplish your goals. It is critical that you take responsibility for task completion. If you can't accomplish what you need to, a good employee immediately communicates with their employer about the situation and comes up with strategies to manage the situation. In work situations, it is common to not be able to always accomplish the outlined tasks. A professional remains calm and solution focused, instead of giving up or panicking.

Daily Action Plan

The *Daily Action Plan* is a helpful tool for looking at your day and the tasks that you need to accomplish. When the thought of accomplishing tasks becomes overwhelming, jot down what you need to do in the day and fit in the main tasks. We have 24 hours in the day, so you should be able to fit in a lot — just take it one step at a time.

Stress Management

A first job or a new position with tough expectations can be overwhelming and stressful. Stress is a natural part of life and growing up. You have control over yourself and your feelings. Take a moment to read through the *Stress Management* suggestions. Having a strategy to approach stressful situations and knowing how to manage yourself will help you in work and in your personal life. Sometimes when you are overly stressed it's hard to remember these tips, so keep this document in an easily accessible location and highlight the ideas that make the most sense to you.

How to Leave Your Job on Good Terms

Eventually you will need to leave your position, even if you have liked your job or you know how to do it well. *How to Leave Your Job on Good Terms* will give you an overview of how to quit in the most positive way possible. Remember that on all your future job applications, you will be asked about your previous position and possibly asked if they can contact your former employer. Be sure that you leave your employer and all of your coworkers on a 'high note' in case you ever need your job back or a future reference.